

**A PROCLAMATION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATOR GRANT**

RE: Requesting that the New York State Office of Children and Families Promulgate Rules and Regulations for Child Protection that Adequately Address Multi-cultural Differences

WHEREAS, last year, this community bore witness to a tragic event involving a family of immigrants who had resettled in Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, although no ethnic or racial group is spared incidences of child abuse and neglect, current social work practice may be employing – statewide – counseling approaches to intervention that should not be universally applied to all at-risk families; and

WHEREAS, in a state and community that welcomes refugees from around the world, we must recognize that individuals and families from nations that have witnessed and experienced great violence and trauma may not have the parental coping skills, or approach to child-rearing and discipline, that most Americans would view as appropriate and reasonable; and

WHEREAS, this welcoming nation has also learned that some ethnic communities – even after resettling in the United States – accept, encourage and pledge girls as young as age 12 or 13 to be given in “marriage” to adult men who pay the family a dowry; and

WHEREAS, these are not legal marriages in New York State, yet a practice that is called an “arranged marriage” in one culture can result in rape charges brought against the “husband” and child abuse charges brought against the parents in another culture that has made a home in the United States; and

WHEREAS, another troubling practice is human trafficking – especially of underage children – who are forced into child labor to repay the costs of their passage to the United States; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned situations were unheard of, or at the very least were uncommon, in the social work sphere a generation ago; and

WHEREAS, since counseling is not an adequate or effective remedial approach for families touched by such aberrant social behavior, state child protection policies, rules and regulations must be updated to consider vast multi-cultural differences in our diverse community and state.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature call on the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to update the Family Assessment Response (FAR) program and other programs related to child protective services in a manner that takes into account vastly

different views on child-rearing and discipline held by cultures from around the world who emigrate to the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be conveyed to Governor Andrew Cuomo; Gladys Carrion, Commissioner of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services; County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Erie County Commissioner of Social Services Carol Dankert, the WNY Delegation to the State Legislature and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.